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## From vote to virus, misinformation campaign targets Latinos

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Tom Perez was a guest on a Spanish-language talk radio show in Las Vegas last year when a caller launched into baseless complaints about both parties, urging Latino listeners to not cast votes at all. Perez, then chairman of the Democratic Party, recognized many of the claims as talking points for #WalkAway, a group promoted by a conservative activist, Brandon Straka, who was later arrested for participating in the deadly Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

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In this Oct. 30, 2020, file photo stickers printed in Spanish sit on the desk of an election judge to be distributed to voters after they cast their ballots in the atrium of Ball Arena, the home of the NBA's Denver Nuggets and the NHL's Colorado Avalanche in Denver. Associated Press



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## From vote to virus, misinformation campaign targets Latinos

Continued from Front

In the run-up to the November election, that call was part of a broader movement to depress turnout and spread disinformation about Democrat Joe Biden among Latinos. It was promoted on social media and often fueled by automated accounts.

The effort showed how social media and other technology can be leveraged to spread misinformation so quickly that those trying to stop it cannot keep up. There were signs that it worked in the presidential race as Donald Trump swung large numbers of Latino votes in some areas that had been Democratic strongholds.

Videos and pictures were doctored. Quotes were



**In this Feb. 25, 2020, file photo Democratic National Committee chair Tom Perez speaks before the start of the Democratic presidential primary debate at the Gaillard Center in Charleston, S.C., co-hosted by CBS News and the Congressional Black Caucus Institute.**

Associated Press

taken out of context. Conspiracy theories were fanned, including that voting by mail was rigged, the Black Lives Matter movement had ties to witchcraft

and Biden was beholden to a cabal of socialists. That flow of misinformation has only intensified since Election Day, researchers and political analysts say,

stoking Trump's baseless claims that the election was stolen and false narratives around the mob that overran the Capitol.

More recently, it has morphed into efforts to undermine vaccination efforts against the coronavirus. "The volume and sources of Spanish language information are exceedingly wide-ranging and that should scare everyone," Perez said. The funding and the organizational structure of this effort isn't clear, although the messages show a fealty to Trump and opposition to Democrats.

A report released this past week said most false narratives in the Spanish-language community "were translated from English and circulated via prominent platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as in closed group chat platforms like WhatsApp, efforts that often appeared coordinated across platforms."

"The most prominent narratives and those shared were either closely aligned with or completely repurposed from right-wing media outlets," said the report by researchers from Stanford University, the University of Washington, the social network analysis firm Graphika and Atlantic Council's DFRLab, which studies disinformation online around the world.

Straka said via email that nothing from the #Walk-Away Campaign "encourages people not to vote." He declined further comment. While much of the material is coming from domestic sources, it increasingly originating on online sites in Latin America.

Misinformation originally promoted in English is translated in places such as Colombia, Brazil, Mexico and

Nicaragua, then reaches Hispanic voters in the U.S. via communications from their relatives in those countries. That is often shared via private WhatsApp and Facebook chats and text chains, and is usually small and targeted enough to be difficult to prevent.

Those originating such campaigns in Latin America often cannot vote in the U.S., but can influence family in this country who do. Kevin McAlister, a spokesman at Facebook, which owns WhatsApp, said that last month the company announced a policy removing accounts most responsible for spreading misinformation about the coronavirus vaccine and other vaccines, and has now taken down millions of pieces of content.

WhatsApp now limits users' ability to send highly forwarded messages to more than one chat at a time. That has led to a 70% reduction in the number of such messages.

With the election behind them, the proponents of misinformation campaigns are now trying to spread chaos more broadly, notably by trying to create doubt about vaccines. Maria Teresa Kumar, president and CEO of Voto Latino, which works to promote Hispanic voting and political engagement nationwide, has personal experience.

Her mother runs an elderly care facility in Northern California and spent weeks planning to forgo getting vaccinated against COVID-19 because a friend at a gym had showed her a video circulating on social media. In it, a woman wearing a lab coat and claiming to be a pharmacist in El Salvador says in Spanish that such vaccines aren't safe. □



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## Calls grow for Cuomo to quit from top New York lawmakers

By **KAREN MATTHEWS and DAVID PORTER**

The two top Democrats in New York's legislature withdrew their support for Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Sunday amid mounting allegations of sexual harassment and undercounting COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins became the first senior Democrat in the state to say the three-term governor should resign. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie stopped short of demanding that Cuomo quit, but said in a statement that "it is time for the Governor to seriously consider whether he can effectively meet the needs of the people of New York."

On Saturday, another woman who worked for Cuomo publicly accused him of inappropriate behavior, on the heels of other allegations in recent weeks.

"Every day there is another account that is drawing away from the business

of government," Stewart-Cousins said in a statement. "New York is still in the midst of this pandemic and is still facing the societal, health and economic impacts of it. We need to govern without daily distraction. For the good of the state Governor Cuomo must resign."

Her push for his resignation came shortly after a Sunday press conference where Cuomo said it would be "anti-democratic" for him to step down.

"They don't override the people's will, they don't get to override elections," Cuomo said during a conference call with reporters when asked about members of his own party calling for him to step down. "I was elected by the people of New York state. I wasn't elected by politicians."

Cuomo said the next six months will determine how successfully New York emerges from the coronavirus pandemic. "I'm not going to be distracted be-

cause there is too much to do for the people," he said, noting that the state must pass a budget within three weeks and administer 15 million more COVID-19 vaccines.

Asked about Ana Liss, who told The Wall Street Journal in a story published Saturday that when she worked as a policy aide to the governor between 2013 and 2015, Cuomo called her "sweetheart," kissed her hand and asked personal questions including whether she had a boyfriend, Cuomo said such talk was "my way of doing friendly banter."

He acknowledged that societal norms have evolved and noted: "I never meant to make anyone feel any uncomfortable."

Liss told the Journal she initially thought of Cuomo's behavior as harmless and never made a formal complaint about it, but it increasingly bothered her and she felt it was patron-



In this Feb. 22, 2021 file photo, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo speaks during a news conference at a COVID-19 vaccination site in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

Associated Press

izing. "It's not appropriate, really, in any setting," she said. "I wish that he took me seriously."

Karen Hinton, a former press aide to Cuomo when he served as the federal housing secretary under President Bill Clinton, detailed an uncomfortable hotel room interaction she had with Cuomo in a story published Saturday in The

Washington Post. Hinton, said that as she got up to leave, he gave her a hug that was "very long, too long, too tight, too intimate."

She described the encounter not as sexual harassment but as a "power play" for "manipulation and control." She was no longer an aide to Cuomo at the time. □



# China tells Biden to reverse 'dangerous practice' on Taiwan

By JOE McDONALD

Associated Press

**BEIJING (AP)** — China's foreign minister warned the Biden administration on Sunday to roll back former President Donald Trump's "dangerous practice" of showing support for Taiwan, the island democracy claimed by Beijing as its own territory.

The claim to Taiwan, which split with the mainland in 1949, is an "insurmountable red line," Wang Yi said at a news conference during the annual meeting of China's ceremonial legislature. The United States has no official relations with Taiwan but extensive informal ties. Trump irked Beijing by sending Cabinet officials to visit Taiwan in a show of support.

"The Chinese government has no room for compromise," Wang said.

"We urge the new U.S. administration to fully understand the high sensitivity of the Taiwan issue" and "completely change the previous administration's dangerous practices of 'crossing the line' and 'playing with fire,'" he said.



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks during a remote video press conference held on the sidelines of the annual meeting of China's National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, Sunday, March 7, 2021.

President Joe Biden says he wants a more civil relationship with Beijing but has shown no sign of softening Trump's confrontational measures on trade, technology and human rights. Surveys show American public attitudes turning more negative toward China, which is seen as an economic and strategic

competitor.

Wang gave no indication how Beijing might react if Biden doesn't change course, but the ruling Communist Party has threatened to invade if Taiwan declares formal independence or delays talks on uniting with the mainland. Wang's comments in a wide-ranging, two-hour

Wang defended proposed changes in Hong Kong that will tighten Beijing's control by reducing the role of its public in government. He dismissed complaints that erodes the autonomy promised to the former British colony when it returned to China in 1997.

The changes announced Friday follow the arrest of 47 pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong under a national security law imposed last year following months of anti-government protests.

Beijing needs to protect Hong Kong's "transition from chaos to governance," Wang said.

The proposal would give a pro-Beijing committee a bigger role in picking Hong Kong legislators. That would be a marked reduction of democracy and Western-style civil liberties in Hong Kong. Mainland officials say they want to make sure the territory is controlled by people deemed patriots. □

Associated Press

news conference reflected Beijing's increasing assertiveness abroad and rejection of criticism over Hong Kong, the northwestern region of Xinjiang and other sensitive topics.

## B-52s again fly over Mideast in U.S. military warning to Iran

By JON GAMBRELL

Associated Press

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)** — A pair of B-52 bombers flew over the Mideast on Sunday, the latest such mission in the region aimed at warning Iran amid tensions between Washington and Tehran. The flight by the two heavy bombers came as a pro-Iran satellite channel based in Beirut broadcast Iranian military drone footage of an Israeli ship hit by a mysterious explosion only days earlier in the Mideast. While the channel sought to say Iran wasn't involved, Israel has blamed Tehran for what it described as an attack on the vessel.

The U.S. military's Central Command said the two B-52s flew over the region accompanied by military aircraft from nations including Israel, Saudi Ara-

bia and Qatar. It marked the fourth-such bomber deployment into the Mideast this year and the second under President Joe Biden. Flight-tracking data showed the two B-52s flew out of Minot Air Base in North Dakota, something Central Command did not mention in its statement on the flights though authorities later published images of the flight crew preparing its departure there.

However, such flights had become common in the last months of former President Donald Trump's administration. Trump's 2018 decision to unilaterally withdraw from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers sparked a series of escalating incidents in the region. Biden has expressed a desire to return to the deal if Iran honors the deal's limits on its nuclear program. □

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## U.S. gives hope to previously denied asylum seekers in camp

By **MARÍA VERZA** and  
**CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN**  
Associated Press

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — In a camp at the U.S.-Mexico border, some asylum seekers were told by officials that the U.S. government may reopen their cases and they would eventually be able to enter the U.S. to wait out the asylum process. The new opening for people previously denied came as Mexican authorities worked to close the improvised camp along the banks of the Rio Grande, across from Brownsville, Texas, that has housed thousands of asylum seekers over the more than two years it existed.

Late Friday night, an official with Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry said via Twitter that the last asylum seekers with active cases from the camp had been processed and the camp was closed. Others with closed asylum cases who were told their cases could be reopened were urged to move to a shelter. But about 50 had still remained in the camp on Saturday until they were finally moved to a shelter and the camp closed later in the day.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security did not respond to requests for comment Friday and Saturday.

Last month, the Biden administration began processing asylum seekers who had been forced to wait out the long process from Mexico during the administration of former President Donald Trump. The Matamoros camp was one of the most visible signs of a policy implemented in response to high numbers of asylum seekers by an administration that worked in various ways to make it more difficult to access protective

status in the United States.

On Saturday, Juan Antonio Sierra, who runs the migrant shelter in Matamoros, confirmed that he had committed to housing asylum seekers with closed cases so that the camp could be closed. Sierra said that the day before, the U.S. Consul in Matamoros, Yolanda Parra, met with officials from the UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration, Mexico's National Immigration Institute, Sierra and some migrants. She agreed that the U.S. government would evaluate the possible reopening of closed cases for the people who remained in the camp, Sierra said.

"I was going to take them to the Casa del Migrante until it was sure they were going to cross," Sierra said. The goal, he said, was to avoid new people arriving at the camp and assure that those who were still there would only cross the border when it was clear their cases would be reopened and avoid that they were immediately deported.

"They're trying to reopen (the cases)," Sierra said. "You're not going to send a person so that they deport them to their country." But he said the migrants were so desperate they "wanted to go without guarantees." Asked if word of reopened cases could draw more people to the border, Rev. Francisco Gallardo, who is in charge of the shelter, said "the avalanche is already here, a lot of people are arriving." He warned it could become more complicated, because there were signs that a new camp would form.

The shelter already has more than 200 migrants staying there.

By Friday afternoon, only



In this July 31, 2019 file photo, migrants line up in Matamoros, Mexico, for a meal donated by volunteers from the U.S., at the foot of the Puerta Mexico bridge that crosses to Brownsville, Texas.

Associated Press

several dozen asylum seekers remained in the riverside camp. Workers dismantled primitive shelters and hauled away portable toilets. Friday night, power was cut to the camp.

But even with the promise that their cases could be reopened, many resisted abandoning the camp for fear that a less public space would allow their shrunken number to be

more easily ignored by the U.S. government.

A Honduran asylum seeker who has lived in the camp for two years with her son said that personnel from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees told her Friday that "the United States had approved the reopening of our cases and that we had to wait some days for them to authorize the crossing to the U.S."

The woman, a former police officer who requested anonymity because she did not want to jeopardize her case, said that the U.S. government had rejected her case earlier. With the help of lawyers, she appealed and was turned down again in November. She has filed a subsequent appeal. □

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become women with vision."  
—Unknown.**

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## March 8 Women in Power

**Annelien Tromp-Diaz****Life gives all of us the opportunity to be better every day**

**Annelien Tromp-Diaz is the leader of Scouting Aruba. Aruba Today approached Annelien to find out more about what inspires her, her achievements, challenges and her experiences as a female influencer in our community.**

**How do you balance work and life responsibilities?**

"Easy! Work, family, hobby, each of them have their own box with me. I take care of each of them as I should and as balanced as possible. When I am at work, I focus completely on my job, when I'm home my complete focus is my family. If there is an emergency I will always try to take care of it immediately and afterward I always go back to what I was doing. Of course, good planning, organization and good communication at home and at work are extremely necessary for it to work."

**Do women in your profession have a hard time getting promoted?**

"I don't find that to be so. Each person must give it utmost constantly, you must empower yourself and if the opportunity presents itself take advantage of it and apply for the promotion or show your interest for a certain position."

**As a female leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?**

"I don't think there was any difficulty because I am a woman, every job has its complexity for either a man or a woman. One more than another but nothing has to be an obstacle, it should be more a challenge in your career. You must do everything possible to overcome them, learn from them and continue to grow. Challenges are what makes our work

more interesting after all."

**Who inspired you and why?**

"Actually, I don't have any specific person that inspires me, it is more a situation that would inspire me in the first place for instance when we as a team achieve our goal or when we help others with a service or a person in need. When I see or read that people extend an helping hand to persons in need who are not their family and do this without expecting anything back, that would inspire me for sure to be a better person and help others in need and be a better citizen. Life gives us the opportunity to be a better person. Not only for ourselves, our financial status, but for our community."

**What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?**

"Always believe in yourself, your potential, stay focused and do not become egocentric. Acknowledge your weaknesses and work towards strengthening them. Be proactive. Be humble and strong at the same time. Present yourself. Take risks. Know that as a woman you can achieve any goal, just as anybody else by working hard and staying positive. Never push someone down for your own interest."

**Do you experience resistance when you are leading men?**

"Never. I always worked with men and for me it is just as much as working with women. We always have to give respect in order to be respected. Always have an open communication, a good base of trust and lead by example. My mother used to be a manager at a big hardware store for many years

in the 70's-80's and working with only men, in a man's world, and she never had a problem with this because she always showed respect towards them for who they were and their abilities. I think I followed her steps."

**What is some of the advice you share with young women entering a male-dominated profession?**

"Be confident and show you are confident. Be courageous. Be committed. Think and show the "I CAN" attitude always and be creative when needed. When you need to ask for a favor or advice just do it."

**Where will we find you on a Saturday morning at 10 a.m.?**

"Normally, I would be at



the Clubhouse in Savaneta or at Felipe B. Tromp school in Noord, after I have finished my household duties, preparing for our weekly girl scout gatherings that take place every Saturday midday in Savaneta and in the afternoon in Noord. Savaneta has a total of 50 girls between the ages of 4-17 and in Noord we have a total of 75 girl scouts. Together we are young and older women leaders who guide our girls to be a better person in whatever situ-

ation and always believe in themselves. I strongly believe in the strength of girl scout! I also believe very much in volunteer work for a better Aruba. Each and every one of us has the obligation to give back to the community by volunteering. Believe me it's not that difficult. There are so many areas that need a helping hand. One of two hours per week is not much but does make a big difference. The satisfaction you get afterward is just fantastic!" □





# March 8 Women in Power

## Specialized nurse, union leader, Gina Maduro "Our women showed that they can!"

Gina Maduro is a professional nurse who has been president of the labour union for the nursing workers for over 10 years. Maduro works at the Horacio Oduber Hospital (HOH) in the emergency room department. It is a very busy department that demands a lot too. She has been working at the hospital almost 30 years, but she also takes part for almost 20 years of the Arubaanse Bond van Werknemers in Verplegende Instellingen (ABV) union, being the first union representative in various departments of the hospital.

### Union vocation

Union labour became a passion for her from a young age. The presence of her father, Mr. Raymundo Maduro (r.i.p), who was the leader of the union GABA,

who fought for the rights of the workers of the government and was a very active leader himself, had influenced Maduro to follow his steps. She still remembers clearly seeing her father sitting in his office gathering with his colleagues, while she sat in a corner coloring. "My father was my biggest inspiration," says Maduro. She started preparing to become a union leader. She followed different courses of training and guidance until she entered the directive of ABV.

She states that her position of being a woman did not interfere with her becoming a Licensed Vocational Nurse or a union leader. She doesn't feel that, on the contrary she feels that as a union leader this helped her along as a female. "It shapes you. It also helps

you a lot in being confident of yourself," she declares.

### Satisfaccion

As a nurse working in a sector dominated by women her gender did not interfere either with her getting the opportunity to grow as a professional. Nevertheless her job in nursing goes according to your studies. Once you have your diploma no one can impede you from being promoted. She has been working at the hospital for almost three decades and she feels that as a professional that she was able to grow in her field and managed to specialize in this area too. Maduro is satisfied with all she has achieved in both fields. Since 2011, when she was elected as president of the ABV Union she has confronted many challenges, one of them being the ne-



gotiation of different collective agreements (CAO). She experiences a growth in membership too. When she became president of ABV the only members were the hospital nurses. She managed to expand it and in 2015 employees of IMSAN also became members and afterward followed employees of the SABA elderly homes foundation, who are still members up till this day. They also have members of Respaldo, which used to be workers of the mental institution, and also workers of the blood bank.

As a woman it is not easy to assume the role of the union leader. She acknowledges that this function has a lot of challenges. It does not have to do with you being a man or a woman, but more of the responsibilities it comes with. Especially because in such a position, even though you try your utmost to help to get what's beneficial for all your members, you will never be able to please everybody. "You need to have the majority standing on your side", she says.

Union labour takes a lot of time. As a Union leader you have to be available practically 24 hours a day. Their members work in different shifts and have different challenges and labour problems and also personal problems you will have to help them with. Especially in this time of crisis is where they have to educate their members.

"We are in the middle of a pandemic where it's very difficult to negotiate. Businesses are trying to hold onto what they are offering already", says Maduro.

The fact that Maduro also has to comply with her work also makes it less easy to which more personal and family sacrifices must be made. It is not easy to combine all this together, but she tries to find a balance between all of them. It all depends on yourself. "You have to find your own way to balance everything and never let it desbalance you." You must work when it's duty time and rest as much as possible when it's your resting time.

#AweMasCuNunca

Bo felicidad *no mester depende* di opinion ni aprobacion

Feliz Dia di Hende Muhe



March 8 **Women in Power****Janine Rodriguez of the Victim Support****“A good leader respects herself, respect others and takes responsibility”**

**Day by day she dedicates her all in her job that she herself assures is not an easy one, but she loves it with all her heart. This special edition is being dedicated to powerful women in our community and one of them is Janine Rodriguez.**

Rodriguez mentioned that this year she will be celebrating 30 years in the service of the government of Aruba and 12 years working for the Victims Support of the Police Force. Rodriguez is the one that has to deal everyday with the most severe cases happening on the island. She gives utmost support to all the family members who were involved in different incidents and offers assistance at any time of the day.

**How do you balance work and life responsibilities?**

“Always make sure to have your work in order. Do not let things for tomorrow, es-

pecially if your work is difficult and demanding. Always lend a helping hand when needed and do it with love.”

**Do women in your profession have a hard time getting promoted?**

No, just do your work as it should be and correct.

**As a female leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?**

Nothing. Always stand for what you do.

**Who inspired you and why?**

My parents, they always told me and my sister to study as much as we can so we don't need to struggle. You never know where life will take you and always respect each and everyone. .

**What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?**

A good leader always respects herself, respects

others and takes responsibility for all her actions and always stands for what you are and for what you believe in.

**Do you experience resistance when you are leading men?**

You will find yourself with resistance “you are a woman, what do you know”, explain who you are and why you are there for them and together you will be able to succeed..

**What is some of the advice you share with young women entering a male-dominated profession?**

Be yourself. Do your work with respect. Men nowadays are aware that women are able to perform just as good as they do.

**Where will we find you on a Saturday morning at 10 a.m.?**

At work or with my family. □



Continued from page 8

**Where will we find you on a Saturday morning?**

On a Saturday morning if she is not working, you will find her at home. She will be busy following all local, regional and international news. As a Union leader you must be up to date of all that is going on in the world. She loves reading books and loves to do training courses that will help her improve in all areas. In her free time she loves going to the beach with her family and socializing with her friends and family.

**Final Message**

For the new generation entering the nursing world or the union world and for any one who wants to be a leader in any field Mad-

uro advises them to not let their position as a woman interfere with their ability to grow. On the contrary, she sees that nowadays more and more women are standing out in key positions, but it still remains a challenge. “Women have demonstrated that they can”, says Maduro.

Last but not least Maduro would like to congratulate all women of Aruba and around the world on this women day. The whole world stands still today and focuses on them.

“I believe that we all have a spouse, a mother, a sister or a daughter, and we have to respect and value them”. □

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# March 8 Women in Power

**Miledy Jerez:**

**A challenged world is an alert world and change arises from the challenge**



**Miledy Jerez is proud of being a woman and of everything she has achieved. Here she tells us a little bit about her childhood, obstacles and confrontation she encountered for being a woman.**

Since young Miledy always loved to study. She finished her college and when she was 20 years old she continued her study at the University where she decided to do journalism. Her inspiration for this was because she liked investigative journalism, doing research, she liked to conduct interviews, being on the road looking for news and she even created her own documentaries.

Miledy's parents at that time were very strict and saw journalism as something dangerous. Miledy's big sister is the one who paid her studies, but later on was not able to continue to do this. This caused for Miledy's dream to stop and she had to take some other direction.

Miledy has 7 sisters and 3 brothers. She felt that they as sisters had the dominion over their brothers. Her brothers asked her for advice for many things. "Without us, our brothers would be like a headless chicken."

After not being able to continue her dream Miledy took a job in teaching. She worked as an intern in science for seven years at an elementary school. Miledy was offered another position but she declined it because it wasn't what she wanted to do. However, she took the position as

secretary which she held for two years. She did take different courses such as english and cashier. She worked for several years until she decided to get married and came to live in Aruba. She has two daughters and has been living in Aruba for 20 years.

Her husband didn't want her to work at first. Because according to their culture a woman should stay at home taking care of the children and the household. She was frustrated by this situation. She finally got a job, but she couldn't count on her partner's help to take her to work so she walked to work everyday until her husband understood her determination and decided to support her in her decision.

Miledy is extremely happy with where she is right now. Even though she has been offered other positions, but due to the lack of transportation she had to decline these offers, this never demotivated her. She woke up everyday with a smile on her face and does her work with extreme satisfaction.

Miledy works six hours per week and is able to balance her work and personal life very well. On a Saturday morning you will find Miledy cooking and cleaning with a budlight beer in her hand and taking care of her husband and two lovely daughters.

Miledy would like to congratulate all women of Aruba on this special day and is very thankful to our women ancestors who fought for our rights. □



**Women who seek to be equal with men lack ambition.**



## International Women's Day Menu at the Sunset Grille, March 8th to 12th

**Palm Beach – A special menu in honor of International Women's Day will be offered at the Sunset Grille, Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino, March 8th to 12th. The menu was created by French-born Executive Sous Chef Katia Soujol.**

Chef Soujol joined the culinary brigade of the resort a number of years ago with a commitment to bring her vast knowledge including grandma's traditional bouillabaisse and ratatouille recipes, to the kitchen, and pass them on to the next generation of Culinarians in Aruba. The chef who hails from Provence, France, started cooking

with her grandma in the countryside, then later followed her passion and her heart and graduated from the Culinary Institute in Nice, France. From then on she garnered impressive accolades everywhere she went; from Master Chef of France, to Top French American Chef. Her nomad career took her to great Michelin restaurants in France, the UK, and Germany, and midway she joined Hilton in Colorado and later on in California, USA, combining her career with teaching Culinary at the Art Institute of California and Long Beach Community College. Her career continued to evolve as she spent time



at famous Chef Pascal Restaurant in Newport Beach and served as Executive Chef of Pastis Restaurant in West Hollywood, California, later relocating to the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, a Four Seasons Resort in glamorous Beverly Hills.

Chef Soujol shares that during one of her trips to China, she volunteered in a number of orphanages. Following the devastating earthquake on April 2015 in Nepal, she was compelled to volunteer for food and supplies delivery in the mountains surrounding Kathmandu. Katia is grateful to report that she survived the May 12th aftershock of the 7.3 magnitude earthquake. That adventure, along with many others, including;

cooking in Hawaii, Vietnam, Cambodia, China and India, appearing in many magazines, radio and TV shows, promoting her special recipes, and making guest cooking appearances surely prepared Soujol for her role in Aruba, as Executive Sous-Chef at Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino.

And while she admits that at first she had no clue where the island was located on the map, when the offer came, she was happy after two decades of traveling, to settle down on the One Happy Island.

The menu created in honor of the day takes off with Shrimp and Smoked Salmon Mousse with a hint of Madame Jeanette Chili,

served with Radish Daikon Pickle and Roquette Salad appetizer, then continues with Aruban Baccalau Topped with Slow Cooked Sea Bass Wrapped in Prosciutto with Crispy Funchi Or Grilled Veal Chop with Local Grown Mushroom Risotto Fresh Pomegranate Au Jus Sauce. The dessert, a guaranteed to please local favorite, Aruban Cashew Fruit Mousse with Pistachio Ponche Crema and Candied Cashew Nuts.

Chef Katia reports that traditional Aruban recipes and ingredients are at the heart of the special menu, and as food is constantly evolving, changing as much as all living, breathing arts, she created a new fusion, peppered by her French flair, multicultural influences, and a womanly touch. It's the New Aruban Gastronomy, she adds.

The Sunset Grille delivers quality food and gracious service, with seating indoor, and outdoor on the open air wrap around terrace. Open seven days a week, from 5:30pm to 10:30pm.

Reservations can be made at [hiltonconciierge@depalmtours.com](mailto:hiltonconciierge@depalmtours.com) or by calling +297 526 6612. □

## The Natoli's honored at Casa Del Mar



**EAGLE BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.**

The honorees were couple Vincent & Tamara Natoli, together with their family. The ceremony was one of importance to us because honoring visitors who have been coming to Aruba for over 35 years is incredibly rare and it was a very memorable moment for all of us.

This lovely group of people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its cleanliness, and Aruba's warm and friendly people whom they became like family to them.

Richardson together with the representatives of the Casa Del Mar Beach Resort presented the certificate to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □

## International Women's Day

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Celebrate International Women's Day with a special menu created by our own Executive Sous Chef, Katia Soujol. This three-course meal is full of local flavors like Shrimp and Smoked Salmon Mousse, Aruban Baccalau with Slow-Cooked Sea Bass, Grilled Veal Chop with Locally Grown Mushroom Risotto, and Aruban Cashew Fruit Mousse.



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# USDA relocations curtail ag research, farmer confidence

By **ROXANA HEGEMAN**

**Associated Press**

**BELLE PLAINE, Kan. (AP)**

— More than a year after two U.S. Department of Agriculture research agencies were moved from the nation's capital to Kansas City, Missouri, forcing a mass exodus of employees who couldn't or didn't want to move halfway across the country, they remain critically understaffed and some farmers are less confident in the work they produce.

The decision to move the Economic Research Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture in September 2019 was pitched as putting them closer to farmers in the nation's breadbasket, though much of their work involves advising members of Congress back in Washington. After the relocation was announced, President Donald Trump's chief of staff at the time, Mick Mulvaney, joked that moving the jobs to Kansas City was also "a wonderful way to streamline government."

Tom Vilsack inherited a demoralized workforce at the two agencies when he took over as secretary of agriculture under President Joe Biden. With 235 vacancies between them, the agencies continued to hire during the pandemic and administration change, but they are putting out work that is smaller in scope and less frequent, causing some farmers to look elsewhere for data they rely on to run their operations.

Among them is Vance Ehmke, who said that since the USDA relocations occurred, he has been paying a lot more attention to private market analysis and what private grain companies are doing. The information feeds his decisions on everything from whether to buy more land or a new tractor to whether to build more grain bins.

"Here, when we need really good, hard information, you are really starting to question groups like USDA, which before that had a sterling reputation," Ehmke said recently. "But out in

the country, people are worried about how good the information is now be-

cause that transition or whether it was the leadership in the department in terms

of what the political goals may have been, I am not exactly sure. But it seems like there was less reliability."



**Adrian Polansky, a farmer and former executive director of the USDA's Farm Service Agency office in Kansas during the Obama administration, stops for a photo while touring his seed processing plant near Belleville, Kan., Friday, March 5, 2021.**

cause those groups are operating at half capacity." The relocation hollowed out years of specialized experience and delayed or scuttled some of the agencies' research and other work. Hiring at the Kansas City site remains well below the roughly 550 high-paying jobs local leaders had anticipated.

Farmers rely on the research to make decisions on a wide range of topics, from rural community planning to farming with climate change and volatile weather conditions, said Aaron Lehman, a farmer who is president of the Iowa Farmers Union. The ERS examines issues including the rural economy, international trade, food safety and programs that provide food assistance to poor Americans. NIFA, meanwhile, provides grants for agricultural research and other farm services.

"It has gone in the wrong direction in general in terms of accuracy now," said Adrian Polansky, a farmer and former executive director of the USDA's Farm Service Agency office in Kansas during the Obama administration. "Whether that was for sure based on

of what the political goals may have been, I am not exactly sure. But it seems like there was less reliability."

Polansky said he looks to commercial sources of agricultural information to corroborate USDA data more often now than he did in the past. He said that even after the agencies fill their openings, it will take time to "become fully impactful" because research is a long-term endeavor.

"When you lose significant staff and significant institutional knowledge, there is just not a way that can't impact the product and information from USDA," he said.

Dan O'Brien, a grain market specialist at Kansas State University Research and Extension, acknowledged that farmers have increasingly been questioning the reliability of the government's agricultural data over the past few years. However, he said those frustrations have dealt more with reports published by other USDA agencies, and that some farmers may be confusing them.

Laura Dodson, the union representative for ERS employees, said the reloca-

racy of its reports, but it has reduced their scope and frequency.

Dozens of ERS reports have either come out late or not at all, including reports on the organic food sector, antibiotic use in animal production, and hired farm workers and labor markets, among others, Dodson said.

For example, a two-year research project on pollinators such as honeybees was shelved because the entire team working on it left the agency rather than move to Kansas City.

ERS published 37 reports in 2018, compared to 11 last year, Dodson said. Those figures don't include its monthly crop price and analysis reports, which have remained fairly steady despite the relocation and the pandemic. Agency employees also published 100 articles in academic journals related to their fields of study in 2018, but just 64 in 2020.

"We help make sure that food is produced safely, timely and responds to changes in the marketplace and changes to environmental sector," she said. "And so if those become less effective because they

are not being informed by good data and research, that will translate directly to how Americans receive their food."

Matt Herrick, a USDA spokesman, said in an email that he couldn't speak to the volume and variety of ERS reports and research under the Trump administration. "However, when you lose more than half of your expert workforce, there is bound to be a noticeable effect," he added, noting that the USDA is focused on restoring employee confidence and morale.

When former Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Purdue toured the new Kansas City headquarters in November 2019, he predicted the agencies would be fully staffed by the first quarter of 2020. That didn't happen.

In October 2016 — before Trump's first year in office — ERS had 318 permanent employees, according to USDA data. By October 2019 — just a month after the move — its workforce had shrunk to 164. As of late January 2021, it had 219 employees, including 67 still based in Washington.

The same trend played out at NIFA, which had 320 employees in October 2016. In October 2019, it was down to 112 workers, though it rebounded somewhat to 218 by late January, including 16 based in Washington.

"Best I can tell, they were putting out information that Trump really did not like hearing, like global climate change and things like that," Ehmke said. "And here in the United States, what we do with groups like that — we can't send them to Siberia, so we send them to Kansas City." □





# Drones vs. hungry moths: Dutch use hi-tech to protect crops

**Associated Press**  
**MONSTER, Netherlands**  
**(AP)** — Dutch cress grower Rob Baan has enlisted high-tech helpers to tackle a pest in his greenhouses: palm-sized drones seek and destroy moths that produce caterpillars that can chew up his crops. "I have unique products where you don't get certification to spray chemicals and I don't want it," Baan said in an interview in a greenhouse bathed in the pink glow of LED lights that help his seedlings grow. His company, Koppert Cress, exports aromatic seedlings, plants and flowers to top-end restaurants around the world. A keen adopter of innovative technology in his

greenhouses, Baan turned to PATS Indoor Drone Solutions, a startup that is developing autonomous drone systems as greenhouse sentinels, to add another layer of protection for his plants. The drones themselves are basic, but they are steered by smart technology aided by special cameras that scan the airspace in greenhouses. The drones instantly kill the moths by flying into them, destroying them in midair. "So it sees the moth flying by, it knows where the drone is ... and then it just directs the drone towards the moth," said PATS chief technical officer Kevin van Hecke. There weren't any moths around on a recent greenhouse visit by The Associated Press, but the

company has released video shot in a controlled environment that shows how one bug is instantly pulverized by a drone rotor. The drone system is the brainchild of former students from the Technical University in Delft who thought up the idea after wondering if they might be able to use drones to kill mosquitos buzzing around their rooms at night. Baan says the drone control system is smart enough to distinguish between good and bad critters. □

## Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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6						9	1	8
	5				2			4
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9		4				8		6
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Difficulty Level ★

3/08

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Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.  
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668  
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.  
Acc. #23951903  
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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# Royalty TV: U.K. monarchy and television have complex ties

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — Britain's royal family and television have a complicated relationship.

The medium has helped define the modern monarchy: The 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II was Britain's first mass TV spectacle. Since then, rare interviews have given a glimpse behind palace curtains at the all-too-human family within. The fictionalized take of Netflix hit "The Crown" has molded views of the monarchy for a new generation, though in ways the powerful, image-conscious royal family can't control.

"The story of the royal family is a constructed narrative, just like any other story," said Phil Harrison, author of "The Age of Static: How TV Explains Modern Britain."

And it's a story that has changed as Britain moved from an age of deference to an era of modern social mores and ubiquitous social media.

"The royals, particularly the younger royals, have moved from the realm of state apparatus to the realm of celebrity culture in recent decades," Harrison said. "That's worked well for them up to a point — but celebrity culture takes as well as gives and is notoriously fickle."

So anticipation and apprehension are both high ahead of Oprah Winfrey's interview with Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan —



This June 2, 1953 file photo shows Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, seated on the throne, receiving the fealty of the Archbishop of Canterbury, centre with back to camera, the Bishop of Durham, left and the Bishop of Bath and Wells, during her Coronation in Westminster Abbey.

Associated Press

the Duke and Duchess of Sussex — a year after they walked away from official royal life, citing what they described as the intrusions and racist attitudes of the British media toward the duchess, who is biracial. A clip released by CBS ahead of Sunday's broadcast shows Meghan, a former TV star, appearing to suggest the royal family was "perpetuating falsehoods" about her and Harry.

A look at some other major royal television moments, and their impact:

**PRINCESS DIANA**

The 1981 wedding of 32-year-old Prince Charles and 20-year-old Lady Diana Spencer at St. Paul's Cathedral was a fairy-tale spectacle watched by an estimated 750 million people around the world.

But the relationship soon soured. The couple separated in 1992, and in 1995 Diana gave a candid in-

terview to the BBC's Martin Bashir, discussing the pressure of media scrutiny and the breakdown of her marriage.

"There were three of us in that marriage," Diana said, referring to Charles' relationship with Camilla Parker-Bowles.

The interview prompted a wave of sympathy for Diana, seen by many as a woman failed by an uncaring, out-of-touch royal establishment — a pattern some say has repeated itself with Meghan.

Charles and Diana divorced in 1996; Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris the following year, triggering intense public mourning and a period of reflection for the monarchy, which has since tried to appear more modern and relatable — with mixed results.

**PRINCE ANDREW**

The biggest scandal to en-

gulf the family in decades stems from the friendship between the queen's second son, Andrew, and wealthy convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who died in a New York jail in August 2019 while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges.

One woman who says she was a victim of Epstein alleges she had sex with Andrew when she was 17, a claim the prince denies. The prince tried to undo the damage by giving an interview to the BBC's "Newsnight" program in November 2019. It backfired spectacularly. Andrew appeared uncomfortable and evasive, and failed to convey empathy for those who say they were exploited by Epstein, even as he defended his friendship with the man.

Charlie Proctor, editor of the Royal Central website, said at the time that the interview was "a plane crashing into an oil tanker, causing a tsunami, triggering a nuclear explosion-level bad."

After the interview, Andrew announced he was "stepping back" from public duties. He has not returned.

**SARAH, DUCHESS OF YORK**

Like Diana before her and Meghan since, Sarah Ferguson was a young woman who had a bruising collision with the royal family.

She was initially welcomed as a breath of fresh air for the stuffy royals when she

wed Prince Andrew in 1986. But she quickly became a tabloid target, dubbed "Freeloading Fergie" for allegedly scooping up freebies and spending more time vacationing than performing public duties.

Some saw snobbery in coverage of a woman who, before and after her marriage, worked for a living and was open about her problems with weight, relationships and money.

After her 1996 divorce, the duchess used television to speak out — frequently. She appeared on Winfrey's show in 1996, saying palace life was "not a fairy tale." She spoke to Winfrey again in 2010 after being caught on video offering access to her ex-husband for \$724,000. The duchess said she had been drinking and was trying to help a friend who needed money. The following year she appeared in her own reality show, "Finding Sarah," on Winfrey's OWN network. The duchess was not invited to the 2011 wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, in what was widely seen as a royal snub.

**"THE CROWN"**

It may be fiction, but Netflix's "The Crown" is the most influential depiction of the royals in years. Over four seasons that have covered Elizabeth's reign up to the 1980s, its portrait of a dutiful queen, prickly Prince Philip, oversensitive Prince Charles and the rest of the clan has brought the royal soap opera to a new generation.

It is widely seen as helping the royals by humanizing them, though British Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden suggested it should come with a warning that it's drama, not history. □

## EL James' 'Freed,' as told by Christian Grey, coming in June



In this Oct. 29, 2015 file photo, author E L James arrives at the amfAR Inspiration Gala in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Christian Grey is tying up the loose ends of his side of the story this summer. "Freed: Fifty Shades Freed as told by Christian" is set to hit shelves on June 1, the publisher said Sunday.

The book is the conclusion to author E L James' trilogy from Christian's point of view. Previous books include "Grey" and "Darker." James said in a statement that "Freed" has been a labor of love.

"For me, just as for Anastasia Steele, Christian is a challenging, infuriating,

and endlessly fascinating character," James added. "Living in his head is exhausting, but I got to explore aspects of his life in Freed that we only glimpsed in the original trilogy."

"Freed" will be published by the Bloom Books imprint of Sourcebooks. James' "Fifty Shades of Grey" trilogy has sold over 150 million copies worldwide and were adapted into a series of films that made over \$1.3 billion at the worldwide box office. □

7	8	3	1	4	9	6	5	2
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4	9	5	2	7	6	1	8	3
2	6	1	3	5	8	4	9	7



# Shiffrin left fuming over start delay after Vlhova home win

**JASNA, Slovakia (AP)** — Mikaela Shiffrin slammed Slovakian race organizers after a women's World Cup giant slalom Sunday, calling them "unprofessional" for making her wait in the start gate before her final run for what she felt was too long.

Holding a slim lead from the opening leg, Shiffrin was ready to start when she had to wait for two minutes while course workers replaced a broken gate.

Finally allowed to go, the American posted only the 11th-fastest time and dropped to third, 0.37 behind the winner, Petra Vlhova of Slovakia.

"It took (two) minutes to fix a gate, that should take 30 seconds," Shiffrin said. "I just felt like she is a good enough skier to win these races on her own and doesn't need this unprofessional act from something that she doesn't have control over, I don't have control over, but just to say, 'Oh, she is in the lead, let's see if we can do something to get into (Shiffrin's) head.'"

While Shiffrin acknowledged interruptions are a common part of the sport, she said the lengthy delay was not necessary this time.

"It's one thing if an athlete falls and gets injured, but it's another thing when it's fixing a gate and that takes (two) minutes with two people and they can't find the flag, or I don't know what was happening," the American said.

"It was a bit ridiculous and that's really obvious," she added. "This not a professional way to handle this situation (...) takes away from her performance, too. She can be proud of how she skied but that's a tough situation."

Shiffrin also acknowledged that she should "handle these situation better" after her delayed start got to her.

"I was OK, I was just getting mad, that's something that I can learn from," she said. "I still did a pretty good job on most of my run but just not quite good enough."

By beating her rival, Vlhova turned the tables on Shiffrin a day after the American had beaten her in the slalom.

Vlhova fell on her back in celebration as soon as first-run leader Shiffrin failed to beat her time.

Vlhova got up and bent over as she fought back tears following the 19th win of her career, but first in a home race on the hill where she regularly trains.

"This is something amazing because everybody who's watching our sport knows that the last races in giant slalom I was not in good shape. I had (a) small crisis," Vlhova said.

Vlhova finished 10th and 12th in the last two giant slaloms on the World Cup, and 12th at the world championships last month. □



Slovakia's Petra Vlhova celebrates on the podium after winning an alpine ski, World Cup women's giant slalom in Jasna, Slovakia, Sunday, March 7, 2021.

Associated Press

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## Islanders cruise past Sabres 5-2 for 5th straight win

By **ALLAN KREDA**  
Associated Press

**UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP)** — Anders Lee and Brock Nelson scored 62 seconds apart early in the second period and rookie Ilya Sorokin made 24 saves as the New York Islanders defeated the Buffalo Sabres 5-2 on Sunday for their fifth straight win.

The victory was the Islanders' sixth straight over the Sabres this season.

After a scoreless first period, Lee netted his team-leading 12th goal of the season at 5:13 just after an Islanders power play expired. Lee scored from in front of Sabres netminder Jonas Johansson with assists to Jordan Eberle and Noah Dobson. Lee has six goals in the six games against the Sabres this season and has eight goals in his past 12 games overall.

"We did a really good job of sticking with our plan and playing with a lead," Lee said. "We really wanted to limit their chances. Just a good team effort."

Nelson quickly made it 2-0 at 6:15, rifling the puck past Johansson, who also lost 5-2 to the Islanders on Thurs-



**New York Islanders center Casey Cizikas (53) and Buffalo Sabres center Curtis Lazar (27) battle for the puck during the third period of an NHL hockey game, Sunday, March 7, 2021, in Uniondale, N.Y.**

Associated Press

day. Oliver Wahlstrom and Nick Leddy assisted.

Casey Cizikas increased the lead to 3-0 at 16:56 with his fourth goal. Assists went to Jean-Gabriel Pageau (200th career point) and defenseman Adam Pelech. "They were playing hard and we capitalized on our chances," Cizikas said. "We bent, but we didn't break."

Sorokin, the 25-year-old netminder, earned his fourth win of the season as the Islanders improved to 10-0-2 at Nassau Coliseum.

The Islanders are the only team in the league without a regulation loss at home.

"We get each other going," Cizikas added. "We want to make it hard and make other teams know they are in for a dogfight in our building."

Jeff Skinner's goal at 5:41 of the third period ruined Sorokin's shutout bid.

It was Skinner's first goal this season and first since last Feb. 29. Skinner, who scored 40 times for Buffalo two seasons ago, is in the second year of an eight-

year, \$72 million contract. He was benched by Sabres coach Ralph Krueger for three games late last month.

Sabres defenseman Colin Miller narrowed the deficit to 3-2 at 9:35 of the third with assists to Sabres captain Jack Eichel and Taylor Hall before Cal Clutterbuck, who also scored in Saturday's 5-2 win over the Sabres, added his third of the season at 12:57.

Nelson scored his second of the game and ninth of the season into an empty net at 17:48 to complete the scoring.

The struggling Sabres who are getting hardly any goal production from their top scorers Eichel, Hall and Skinner (five goals between them in a combined 64 games) are 2-10-1 since a forced two-week delay in their season during early February because of COVID-19 protocols.

Eichel, the team captain who scored 36 times last season, hasn't scored since Jan. 28. Hall, the first overall pick by Edmonton in 2010 who signed for one year with the Sabres as a free agent, has scored only

once since opening night. That goal came in Thursday's 5-2 loss to the Islanders.

Krueger again tried to find positives amid his team's swoon. The schedule doesn't get any easier as the Sabres visit Philadelphia on Tuesday before playing five of their next six games at home, where they have only won twice in 11 games. "The psychology and execution of it is something that we have to continue to address," the coach said. "There was at least a reaction in the third today, but in the end, we needed a result and we didn't get it."

The Islanders (15-6-4) lead their division 25 games into the abbreviated 56-game season. They also improved to 21-2-3 in the second game of back-to-back games under coach Barry Trotz.

"I thought both teams played really hard and the right way today," Trotz said. "We're doing the right things. You just have to battle it out. I think we understand that. We kept pressuring them and playing our game." □

## Kawhi and Popovich reunited? Leonard wants to go to Olympics



Los Angeles Clippers forward Kawhi Leonard (2) shoots against Washington Wizards center Moritz Wagner, left, during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Thursday, March 4, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **TIM REYNOLDS**  
AP Basketball Writer

Kawhi Leonard is planning to play for Gregg Popovich again and chase a gold medal. Leonard said Sunday at the All-Star Game in Atlanta that he is planning to compete with USA Basketball this summer at the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics — which would reunite him with Popovich.

Leonard spent his first seven seasons in the NBA with Popovich and the San Antonio Spurs, before moving on to the Toronto Raptors and now the Los Ange-

les Clippers. Popovich will serve as head coach at the Olympics for the first time.

The Olympics could be a potentially tight squeeze schedule-wise for Leonard. The Clippers will likely be one of contenders to win the Western Conference finals and play in the NBA Finals — which, if they go the full seven games, are currently scheduled to end on July 22.

The Tokyo Olympics begin July 23, and the U.S. plays its first game against France on July 25.

"If I feel up to it and feel

ready to go around that time, then I'm going to play," Leonard said.

USA Basketball is expected to finalize a player pool of about 60 names — many of them holdovers from the 44 announced as members of the pool last year, a group that includes Leonard — in the not-too-distant future. From there, a team will be picked and the current plan is to bring that group to Las Vegas around July 1 to begin training camp and a series of exhibition games against other national teams. □